

Smoke-free Beach Campaign Launch Report



Launch Breakdown:

On Wednesday 27th April ASH Wales celebrated Port Eynon joining the Smoke-free Beaches campaign. The campaign's launch was an opportunity to highlight:

- That smoking not only harms public health, but can also harm the environment.
- That last year Welsh beaches held the highest amount of cigarette butt waste in Great Britain.
- That small voluntary changes can have an impact on reducing secondhand smoke, the environment and protecting wildlife.
- The importance of educating youth about the health and environmental harms of smoking.
- Smoking is an addiction, and as such smokers should not be stigmatised within campaigns.

To mark the launch, ASH Wales conducted a beach clean with a local school, and organised various activities throughout the day. Activities included:

- Talking to local children about the harms cigarette waste ensues on the coastline.
- Unveiling the campaign's new branding and information signs.
- Asking local children to create a giant smoke-free sign out of driftwood and pebbles.
- Asking local children to create beach artworks to voice why we must take care of marine life and the environment from the harms of cigarette litter.

Pictures of the above launch can be found at the end of this document.

To view a video of the launch, click [here](#).

Media and Ministerial Support

To maximise the campaign's reach, ASH Wales distributed two press releases and held various interviews throughout the launch. The press releases included lines of support from the Deputy Minister of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle, who is spearheading the new Tobacco Control Strategy for Wales. As the precursor strategy's documents outline, there is a clear need to address the environmental harms of smoking in Wales. In light of this, we are thankful for the Deputy Minister's statement of support. Please find the Deputy Minister's supportive lines below:

Deputy Minister Lynne Neagle has praised the roll-out of the new Smoke-free initiative. She said:

'It is vital that we recognise that smoking not only impacts our health, but can also impact our surroundings. I fully endorse any body of work which highlights the environmental harms of cigarettes, and takes steps to limit these harms'.

'It is great to see so many young people involved in today's beach clean, and in turn support the new initiative. As I've highlighted in the foreword to the new Tobacco Control Strategy for Wales, we must all come together to help limit the harmful effects of smoking. Initiatives such as this bring us one step closer to becoming a healthier and more environmentally conscious nation'.

Press Coverage

The campaign's new launch was covered on the following outlets:

Radio

- BBC Wales: Country Focus Programme
- Greatest Hits Radio South Wales
- Nation Radio
- The Wave
- Heart
- **BBC Wales Breakfast Show:** ASH Wales CEO Suzanne Cass spoke to the presenter Claire Summers about the following:
 - That the latest Marine Conservation Society stats mark that Wales holds the highest cigarette butts in Great Britain.
 - That smoking is harmful to not only health, but also to the environment.
 - The importance of changing social attitudes towards smoking for future generations.
 - The importance of limiting secondhand smoke to children in public spaces.
 - The importance of not stigmatising smokers, as smoking is ultimately an addiction.

The above interview can be found on BBC Online, [here](#).

Print

- Wales Online, [here](#).
- Wales 247, [here](#).
- Swansea Bay News, [here](#) and [here](#).
- Press 24, [here](#).
- In Your Area, [here](#)

TV

- That's TV South Wales: News Bulletins

Please find below the press releases circulated around the campaign's new launch:

Press Release 1: Local School Children Launch Smoke-free Beach



Knelston school children carrying out a beach clean to celebrate Port Eynon becoming Smoke-free.

- Knelston Primary School has joined a beach clean to celebrate Port Eynon becoming Smoke-free.
- Port Eynon becomes Swansea's third beach to join the Smoke-free Beaches campaign.
- The campaign encourages beach visitors to not smoke via a voluntary no-smoking initiative.
- The initiative's drive is to protect the local environment from the harms of cigarette waste.

Local school children from Knelston Primary have joined a beach clean to celebrate Port Eynon joining a Smoke-free campaign. The campaign encourages visitors to not smoke on the beach via a voluntary smoke-free initiative, which seeks to reduce cigarette litter and protect the environment.

The campaign was launched by ASH Cymru, a health organisation that raises awareness around the harms of tobacco in Wales. Port Eynon is Swansea's third beach to join the voluntary initiative, which will be sign-posted at the beach's main entrances.

The campaign has been welcomed by local school children, who have joined ASH Cymru and Swansea Council in a beach clean. The clean has been organised to raise awareness of the environmental harms of cigarettes litter, in a bid to protect the coastline for future generations to come.

Cigarette butts remain a big problem in Wales, with the latest Marine Conservation Society survey revealing that Welsh beaches held the highest amount of cigarette butt litter in Great Britain. The survey found an average of 64.2 cigarette butts per 100 metres of Welsh beach in 2021, a stark rise from 9.5 in 2020, and 32.6 in 2019.

On a global scale 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded each year, making cigarette butts one of the most littered items on earth. Cigarette butts take up to 12 years to breakdown and as they do they leach nicotine

and heavy metals before turning into microplastic pollution. In addition, studies examining the toxicity of cigarette butts have found them to contain approximately 4000 harmful chemicals, which can ultimately seep into the environment. Research has shown that one cigarette butt left to soak in water for 96 hours will release enough toxins to kill half of the salt and freshwater fish that are exposed to it.

In addition to environmental benefits, research has shown that smoke-free spaces can reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, and can have a positive influence on social norms. In light of this, ASH Cymru believe that the new smoke-free initiative will create an environment that is safer and ultimately cleaner for visitors.

ASH Cymru's CEO Suzanne Cass commended the local school's involvement, marking how children can help shape a greener society. She said: " We are delighted that local children recognise the importance of protecting the environment, which in turn will aid wider efforts to create a healthier and greener Wales.

'It is ultimately our children who will reap the benefits of today's initiative. Our efforts now can hold a big impact for their future".

Mr Philip Jenkins, Headteacher of Knelston Primary, highlighted the importance of educating children about the harms of cigarettes. He said: " It is important that we voice that cigarettes can not only harm our health, but can also harm our natural surroundings.

'Our children will go on to be the next custodians of Wales, and we must educate them for this responsibility. It is up to us to ensure that our children become ethically informed citizens of not only Wales, but also the world".

To date, Langland Bay, Caswell Bay and Little Haven in Pembrokeshire have joined the ASH Cymru Smoke-free Beach campaign. It is thought that the addition of Port Eynon, one of the Gower peninsula's most popular sites, will encourage other beach authorities to take similar green steps.

A spokesperson from Swansea Council said: " The Council fully supports initiatives to protect the coastline for future generations to come.

'We hope the voluntary initiative will encourage visitors to take the small steps needed to make a big difference in protecting our local environment".

On a national scale, the Welsh Government has recently committed to reducing the environmental impact of smoking. The commitment was recently relayed in the new Tobacco Control Strategy for Wales, which aims to create a healthier smoke-free nation by 2030. Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle, is overseeing the new strategy, and praised the roll-out of the new Smoke-free initiative. She said: "It is great to see so many young people involved in today's beach clean, and in turn support the new initiative.

'As I've highlighted in the foreword to the new Tobacco Control Strategy for Wales, we must all come together to help limit the harmful effects of smoking. Initiatives such as this bring us one step closer to becoming a healthier and more environmentally conscious nation".

If you would like to find out more about Smoke-free Beaches, please visit: www.ash.wales

Press Release 2: Blue Flag Beach Joins Smoke-free Campaign



Knelston school children create giant Smoke-free sign made out of driftwood and pebbles to mark the launch.

- Port Eynon becomes Swansea's third beach to join the Smoke-free Beaches campaign.
- The campaign encourages visitors to not smoke via a voluntary no-smoking initiative.
- The drive is to protect local wildlife and the environment from the harms of cigarette waste.
- The latest annual survey from the Marine Conservation Society found that Welsh beaches held the highest amount of cigarette litter in Great Britain in 2021.

Port Eynon has become Swansea's third beach to join the Smoke-free Beaches campaign, an initiative which seeks to limit the harms of cigarette waste on local wildlife and the environment.

As from April this year, visitors to the beach will be encouraged to not smoke via a voluntary no-smoking initiative, which will be signposted at the beach's main entry points. The voluntary change will seek to reduce cigarette litter, in a bid to protect the coastline for future generations to come.

On a global scale 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded each year, making cigarette butts one of the most littered items on earth. Cigarette butts take up to 12 years to breakdown and as they do they leach nicotine and heavy metals before turning into microplastic pollution. In addition, studies examining the toxicity of cigarette butts have found them to contain approximately 4000 harmful chemicals, which can ultimately seep into the environment. Research has shown that one cigarette butt left to soak in water for 96 hours will release enough toxins to kill half of the salt and freshwater fish that are exposed to it.

Cigarette butts remain a big problem in Wales, with the latest Marine Conservation Society survey revealing that Welsh beaches held the highest amount of cigarette butt litter in Great Britain in 2021. The survey found an average of 64.2 cigarette butts per 100 metres of Welsh beach in 2021, a stark rise from 9.5 in 2020, and 32.6 in 2019.

The new Smoke-free initiative has been spearheaded by tobacco control organisation ASH Wales, a charity which raises awareness on the harms of tobacco in Wales. The charity has worked closely with Swansea Council, who have shown support for the green initiative.

ASH Wales CEO Suzanne Cass has praised the Council for its proactive approach to the environment. She said: "We are delighted that Swansea Council have taken proactive steps in protecting the coastline, which will aid wider efforts to create a greener and more sustainable Wales.

'The smoke-free initiative will encourage visitors to think about how cigarette waste can affect the environment, and the wildlife that call the coastline home. I would encourage other councils across Wales to consider how they too can make a difference'".

Beyond environmental benefits, research has shown that smoke-free spaces can reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, and can have a positive influence on social norms. In light of this, ASH Wales believe that the smoke-free initiative will create an environment that is safer and ultimately cleaner for visitors.

Last year, ASH Wales conducted a survey to measure local public opinion on the smoke-free initiative. The survey revealed that 92% of participants were supportive of Port Eynon becoming Smoke-free, when told of the environmental benefits this would hold. In addition, 96% of all the survey's respondents agreed that cigarette waste negatively impacts sea life and the environment.

Anne Ellsmore, owner of the local business The Seafarer, praised the move and said: "Any initiative to limit the amount of cigarette litter our beach is a good thing, and will make it a nicer place to visit for tourists and locals alike'".

To date, Langland Bay, Caswell Bay and Little Haven in Pembrokeshire have joined ASH Wales' Smoke-free Beach campaign. It is thought that the addition of Port Eynon, one of the Gower peninsula's most popular sites, will encourage other beach authorities to take similar green steps.

A spokesperson from Swansea Council said: " The Council fully supports initiatives to protect the coastline for residents, visitors and for future generations to come.

'We hope the voluntary initiative will encourage visitors to take the small steps needed to make a big difference in protecting our environment'".

On a national scale, the Welsh Government has recently committed to reducing the environmental impact of smoking. The commitment was recently relayed in the new Tobacco Control Strategy for Wales, which aims to create a healthier smoke-free nation by 2030. Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle, is overseeing the new strategy, and marked the importance of limiting the harmful effects smoking. She said: 'It is vital that we recognise that smoking not only impacts our health, but can also impact our surroundings.

'I fully endorse any body of work which highlights the environmental harms of cigarettes, and takes steps to limit these harms'".

If you would like to find out more about Smoke-free Beaches, please visit: www.ash.wales

References and studies included within the press releases:

- 4.5 trillion discarded cigarette butts stats can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Cigarette butts take 12 years to break-down stat found [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Cigarette butt and microplastic pollution research can be found [here](#).
- Study examining cigarette butts effects on salt and fresh water fish found [here](#).

- Cigarette waste toxicity to animals, aquatic life and the environment found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Cigarette butt toxicity, 4000 chemical literature and stats can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Marine Conservation Society 2021 Survey results found [here](#) and [here](#).
- Studies showing smoke-free spaces reduce SHS and influence social norms, found [here](#) and [here](#).

For further information on the above press releases, please contact:

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Photo's were taken by ASH Cymru for press. Guardian permission obtained.
Please contact the above if you have trouble opening the below link to launch pictures.
Photos can be downloaded [here](#).

About us:

ASH Wales Cymru is the leading organisation working for a smokefree Wales via strong tobacco control policy and country-wide campaigns. We work to raise awareness of the health, economic and environmental effects of smoking by engaging with communities, young people and partners across Wales.

NB: Please refer to ASH Wales as a health/ tobacco control organisation.

Website www.ash.wales Facebook www.facebook.com/ASHCymru
Twitter www.twitter.com/ASHWalesCymru

Photos of the launch:



Drone aerial shot of a smoke-free sign the school children made out of driftwood and pebbles.



ASH Cymru CEO Suzanne Cass explains the environmental harms of cigarette waste.



Knelston Primary school group shot after the beach clean.



The new Smoke-free Beaches sign unveiled at Port Eynon.



Local children were asked to create beach art voicing what protecting the environment means to them.



Bottom Left: Knelston Primary school receiving Smoke-Free School bags and bottles at the campaign launch.
Bottom Right: Knelston Primary school's tweets highlighting the event.



Knelston Primary schoolchildren collecting rocks beneath ASH Wales Smoke-free flags.



ASH Wales Policy & Public Affairs Manager Simon Scheeres organising a final group shot to mark the launch.



Knelston Primary school celebrating Port Eynon becoming Smoke-free.