

CLOUGHEY BEACH

Following an East Border Region survey 'Pride in our Rural Villages', prepared on behalf of Ards Borough Council for Cloughey and published in March 2008, a number of concerns were raised by residents regarding the local environment including:

- Cleanliness of the beach
- Bathing quality of the local sea water
- Wellbeing of the Warren, a popular local wildlife area beside the beach
- Disabled access to seashore.
- Coastal Walk

These particular issues were adopted by Cloughey and District Community Association (CDCA) for further investigation as it was felt that these were areas where positive steps could be taken to address these concerns and improve Cloughey for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Since 2008, the CDCA has made significant progress in each of these areas, as summarised below.

The Beach

In May 2008, Tidy NI announced a new coastal initiative in the Clean Coast/Green Coast Awards. The Clean Coast Award was created to encourage groups working on, and improving, less well known rural beaches and the Green Coast Award would be in addition to the already well recognized Blue Flag Beaches.

The representatives of the Committee of Cloughey and District Community Association (CDCA) attended the official launch of this coastal programme and committed Cloughey to full participation. The agreement of the owner of the beach, Mr. Wm Montgomery of Grey Abbey Estates was sought and readily given. A Clean/Green Coast Management Plan was prepared by the CDCA in 2009 for Cloughey and submitted to Tidy NI.

Since engaging in the Clean Coast programme, the CDCA has achieved the following:

- Recognition through a number of coastal awards, as below:
 - 2008 CDCA Tidy NI Clean Coast Certificate
 - 2009 CDCA Two Tidy NI Clean Coast Awards
 - 2010 CDCA Tidy NI Coastal Custodians of the Year
CDCA Tidy NI Green Coast Award for Cloughey Beach
 - 2011 CDCA NIEA/NI Water Community Award and Best Project. Beach/Sea Water Quality related
- Regular litter sweeps of the beach and Warren by local residents, schools, caravanners and holiday home owners.
- Support of all special beach events such as the Province wide Annual Big Spring Clean Initiative, Tidy NI Clean Coast Week and NI Water's 'Bag It and Bin It'
- Sourced funding for Sea Water Quality Tests in 2009/10/11
- Participated in Marine Conservation Society (MCS) Annual September Beach Survey Weekends 2008/09/10/11 Cloughey was one of the cleanest beaches in the UK in the MCS 2010 survey
- Moth Identification Mornings 2010/2011
- Sand Sculpture Beach Events in 2010 and 2011

Sea Water Quality

This was an area of concern for residents as it was felt that the sea water in Cloughey Bay was not clean. The NIEA does not include Cloughey in their list of official N Ireland bathing beaches and water tests to determine if this belief was correct had never been completed. The CDCA sourced the funding to cover the cost of these tests and proved that the water in Cloughey Bay is actually of excellent quality:

- 2009 Set of Three Excellent, plus Two Good Water Quality Tests.
- 2010 Complete Set of Excellent Water Quality Tests
- 2011 Complete Set of Excellent Water Quality Tests

The Warren

Initially the management plan highlighted the beach and Warren as an integral part of the Outer Ards Area of Special Interest (ASSI) and damaging operations such as scrambler and quad damage needed attention by the responsible authorities, namely Ards BC and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). The CDCA lobbied and was responsible for this important local area of the ASSI having appropriate signage erected and for adequate protection being undertaken by officers of the two agencies.

The Warren has subsequently been used by the CDCA each year since 2008 as an outdoor classroom to take classes from the two local primary schools, Kirkistown and St Patrick's, Ballygalget, to identify wildflowers, butterflies and day flying moths, their caterpillars and chrysalises. In addition, Kirkistown PS has been involved with helping the CDCA with litter control on the beach and a seashore programme is being prepared by the CDCA to enable the two schools to study seaweeds, molluscs and sea bird identification, starting in the 2011/2012 school year.

Coastal Walk

The planning for this particular project is complete and has passed a number of phases of an Interreg 4a Grant process and now only awaits the final letter of offer to Ards BC. All the necessary permissions from the landowners are in position and the requisite clearances from the NIEA regarding the ASSI have been granted.

Disabled Access

The CDCA applied to DARD for funding covering an improvement scheme for the village which included disabled access to the beach. The application was unsuccessful on this occasion but we are pursuing other methods of achieving this particular goal, concentrating on the possibility of funding a pedestrian board walk to the beach from the Warren car park.

Outer Ards Beach Group

A group of villages on the Outer Ards, Cloughey, Portavogie, Ballywalter and Millisle, have been meeting informally to share commonalities of beach related problems and possible solutions. They have held three meetings since July 2011 and are scheduled to meet again 10 January 2012

CLOUGHEY BATHING WATER QUALITY RESULTS

2009

Bacteria Counts 2011	Enterococci (cfu/100ml)	Faecal Coliforms (cfu/100ml)	Total Coliforms (cfu/100mls)
15 June 2009	2	27	27
6 July 2009	72	51	51
27 July 2009	16	0	0
18 August 2009	62	150	150
7 September 2009	15	300	300

2010

6 June 2010	0	0	2
29 June 2010	74	23	135
13 July 2010	35	61	67
3 August 2010	2	1	87
24 August 2010	20	9	33

2011

27 June 2011	0	0	20
12 July 2011	5	8	65
26 July 2011	1	1	0
23 August 2011	1	1	53
6 September 2011	2	5	14

Excellent Water Quality

No more than 100 Enterococci , 100 Coliforms and 500 Total Coliforms.

Good Water Quality

No more than 100 Enterococci, 2000 Coliforms and 10,000 Total Coliforms

Poor Water Quality

Water containing bacterial levels exceeding limits shown above for **Good Water Quality**