

Community Grants Scheme (CGS) Projects

Over the three rounds SeaScapes awarded a total of eighteen grants to local organisations. Applicants had to demonstrate their project tied in with one of the SeaScapes four main themes: 'Blue Future,' 'Access to Sea,' 'Revealing Hidden Heritage,' and 'SeaScapes Over Time.' Each project is summarised below:

Round One CGS Projects

Organisation: EDAN (East Durham Artist's Network)

Webpage: edanart.co.uk

Facebook Page: [EDAN Facebook](#)

Project Name: 'Tidal Shift' (Theme: Blue Futures, Revealing Hidden Heritage)

EDAN ran a photography competition for residents from the Seaham and Easington area. Residents were invited to submit an electronic image (camera / mobile phone) they had taken of a local coastal feature which had inspired them. The project offered four walks with experienced photographers to learn photography skills by going out and capturing images of the coast.

Twenty winning entrees were selected by a panel of EDAN artists, and these images were mounted and displayed at the EDAN Gallery in July 2023. These images were then shown in the 'Motion 4 the Ocean' exhibition at Seaham Hall in October 2023. A final fourteen were then chosen to create a 2024 calendar to celebrate and promote local hidden heritage (**Figure 1**).



Figure 1 EDAN Seascales Calendar 2024 celebrating photographs taken by residents from Seaham and Easington.

Organisation: ICOS (International Community Organisation of Sunderland)

Webpage: icos.org.uk

Facebook Page: [ICOS Sunderland Facebook](#)

Project Name: 'Seeing Blue' (Theme: Blue Futures, Access to Sea)

ICOS delivered creative activities and workshops focused on marine life and environmental issues to BME (Black and Minoritized) women from the Sunderland area. A local artist taught participants how to create pendants and framed pictures using sea glass and driftwood collected during a beach visit (**Figure 2**). The group also visited a local Wild Oyster Project and helped volunteers to pull artificial oyster nurseries from the marina and record data.

During a beach clean with [The 2-minute foundation](#) the group learned about the impacts of plastics to the marine environment. To celebrate the end of the project the group visited an Aquarium to have a better understanding of marine wildlife and the types of habitats that can be found along the coast. The group have said they are keen to continue learning more about the marine environment.



Figure 2 ICOS Activities including the art workshop and visit to the Sunderland Native Oyster project.

Round Two CGS Projects

Organisation: Jack of Hearts

Facebook Page: [Jack of Hearts CIC Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Story Nets - Coral Gardens for Wintertide Festival (Theme: Blue Futures, Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

Jack of Hearts worked with members of the community to conduct a beach clean on the Hartlepool headland. Residents then worked with artists to create an UV installation with soundscape (**Figure 3**) which was displayed for three nights in the Regents Square Gardens as part of the [Wintertide Festival 2023](#). The installation included a coral garden made using UV wool and reclaimed materials from the beach clean.

Residents also decorated their windows with crochet and yarn sea life displays. Workshops included the gathering of vox pops. One resident said, “Really love how this community can really work together to create art ... we’re not even arty!” After the beach clean a participant aged ten said “I feel like I have rescued some wildlife today.”



Figure 3 Jack of Hearts – Coral Garden UV Installation as part of the Hartlepool 2023 Wintertide Festival.

Organisation: Southwick REACH

Facebook Page: [Southwick REACH \(Research Education Arts and Culture Home\)](#)

Project Name: *“The Seaside is our Garden” (Theme: Access to Sea, SeaScapes over time)*

Members aged 60 to 90yrs old of Southwick REACH were given the opportunity to participate in blue space activities and explore their maritime heritage. During a tour of the Sunderland Maritime Heritage Centre, members learnt about how the industrial heritage (e.g., shipbuilding) has changed over the years. The project also looked at the natural heritage, the changing ecology, and the importance of activities like dolphin watching and swimming for wellbeing.

On Roker beach everyone was encouraged to be mindful of their surroundings to inspire creativity and raise awareness of the marine environment. A soundscape was produced by a sound recording artists from conversations and storytelling initiated by focusing on coastal sounds. The participants then shared their creations as part of an exhibition at Austin House Family Centre in 2023 (**Figure 4**).



Figure 4 Southwick REACH exhibition at Austin House Family Centre and the members visit to Roker.

Organisation: The Little Company of Calm

Webpage: [Home | tlcoc.co.uk](http://tlcoc.co.uk)

Facebook Page: [The Little Company of Calm Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Wellbeing by the Sea (Theme: Access to Sea, Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

The Little Company of Calm's project focused on supporting communities to access local seascapes to improve mental health and well-being by engaging the senses to appreciate natural resources. Qualified mindfulness teachers and volunteers delivered six guided mindful walks at Souter, Roker, Seaburn, and South Shields. Walks included guided meditations, inspirational quotes / poems linked to the sea and mindful movement similar to gentle yoga and tai chi (**Figure 5**).

The project captured how local seascapes affected participants through surveys and creating a video: [TLCC - Mindful Walk promo on Vimeo](#) . A strong message that came from participants was their appreciation for the natural beauty we have on 'our doorsteps' and how the sea and outdoors can support good mental health.



Figure 5 The Little Company of Calm practising how to to enage the senses during a mindful walk.

Organisation: East Durham Divers

Webpage: [Home - East Durham Divers](#)

Facebook Page: [East Durham Divers Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Beneath the Waves Coastal Clean-up (Blue Futures)*

The East Durham Divers (EDD) conducted five days of diving to collect unseen rubbish/ghost fishing line from the seabed around the north pier at Seaham. The EDD team consisted of volunteer certified BSAC scuba divers, two RIB boats, and a land team at the marina. A growing number of local communities are now getting involved in beach cleans and EDD wanted to use this opportunity to raise awareness of how litter can end up in the sea and impact hidden marine habitats and wildlife.

The rubbish collected was photographed and shown to members of the public as it was brought to shore (**Figure 6**). Items collected included plastics, beer/soda cans, ghost netting, a damaged lobster pot, recreational fishing lead weights, and even a coffee machine! In one dive session alone, the dive team retrieved 19kgs of rubbish. Re-cycling was also an important message and when possible, some of the collected material was re-used or will be donated to create art displays.



Figure 6 East Durham Divers and examples of the litter collected during clean up dives around Seaham harbour.

Organisation: Curious Arts

Webpage: [Curious Arts - LGBTQ Arts Development across the North East](#)

Facebook Page: [Curious Arts Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Creative Sea Change: Beyond the Horizon (Theme: Access to Sea, Blue Futures)*

Curious Arts brought young LGBTQIA+ people from Sunderland, Middlesborough, Durham, and Newcastle together for a day at Seaham beach. Activities helped bridge young people from urban environments to engage with their neighbouring coastline by looking at marine heritage and discussing the future of the coast. Activities included a litter picking session, sea glass collecting, and making temporary pride flags using only found materials (**Figure 7**).

Watching the sea inspired discussions to reflect on personal experiences and how the waves can represent the rhythms and struggles of growing up as young LGBTQIA+ people in the Northeast. Participants left with a newfound understanding of their place within their local coast environment and their responsibility to help protect it. The day helped connect young people to one another and to champion LGBTQIA+ communities.



Figure 7 Curious Arts trip to Seaham beach collecting sea glass and creating a pride flag.

Organisation: Play Out Hartlepool

Facebook Page: [Play Out Hartlepool | Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Coastal Awareness and Access Project (Theme: Access to Sea)*

Play Out Hartlepool arranged two visits to the Headland beach for families from Victoria Ward Hartlepool. The group met and travelled together using local transport which gave some children the first opportunity to go and play on the beach. Families built sandcastles, played ball games, and went paddling in the sea. They learnt about natural objects, litter, and wildlife as they completed a 'beach spotting' sheet.

A highlight for the children was watching how long the cormorants remained under water after diving for fish. Families also observed some of the local points of interest including the Andy Cap monument and St Hilds. With the help of a local artist everyone worked together to create beach art which was later shared at the Central Hub in Hartlepool (**Figure 8**).



Figure 8 Beach art created by the families on their trip to the beach with Play Out Hartlepool.

Organisation: Banyan Arts

Webpage: [Home | om.be \(banyanarts.co.uk\)](http://www.banyanarts.co.uk)

Facebook Page: [Banyan Arts Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Safe Haven (Theme: Access to Sea, Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

Banyan Arts brought together fifteen stroke survivors, family members/carers to explore the South Shields coastline through a series of photography walks, social get-togethers, and story-sharing. The group learnt new photography and editing skills whilst capturing images of the surrounding natural beauty and cultural heritage they found along the coast.

Trained volunteers supported the group, and this has given everyone a new confidence to know just how accessible the beach can be which has sparked a new connection to the coast. The group were able to celebrate their achievements and showcase the coastline by creating a pop-up photography exhibition at the Donnison Heritage Centre, Sunderland (**Figure 9**). The overall experience has led to discussions of stewardship of the coast and the part they too can play.

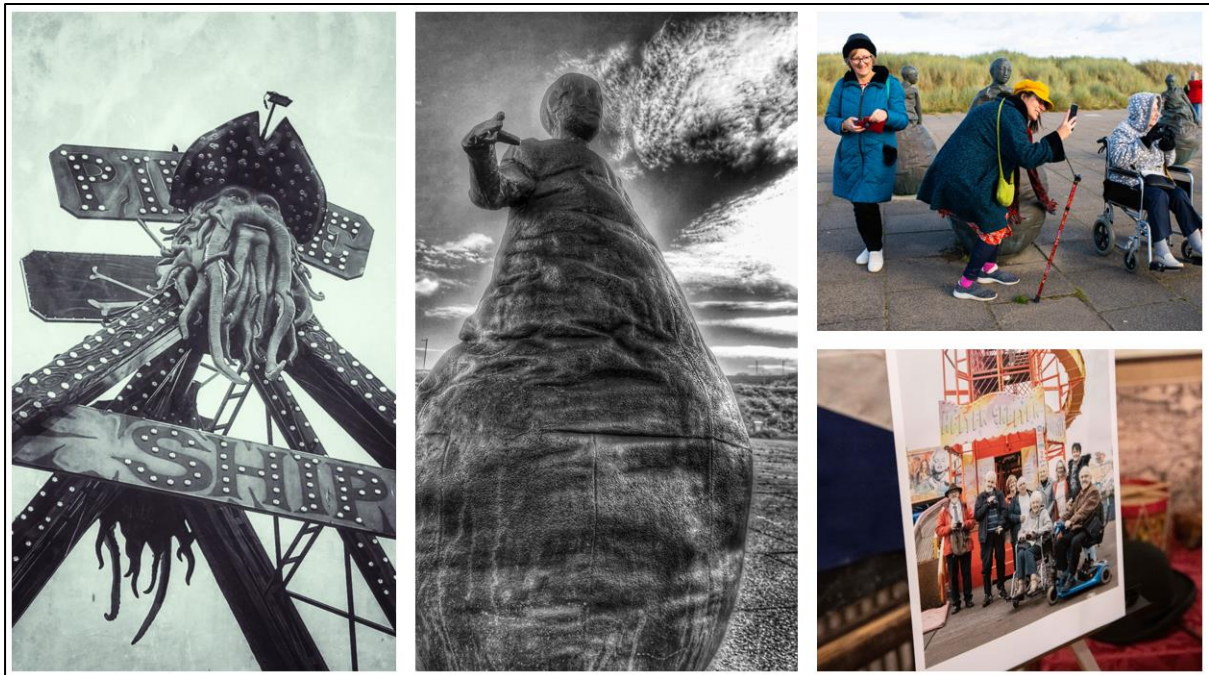


Figure 9 Photographs captured by members of the Banyan Arts group during their visit to South Shields.

Organisation: We Make Sound

Webpage: [We Make Sound \(wemakesoundne.co.uk\)](http://wemakesoundne.co.uk)

Facebook Page: [We Make Sound Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Sonic Stories of the Sea (Theme: Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

We Make Sound ran a 3-day creative project for young people (11-18yrs) from the Hartlepool area. During a beach visit participants recorded ‘found’ sounds and compared the different sounds produced by organic, natural material, and litter. During a visit to the RNLI, they interviewed a mechanic who shared his experiences of volunteering on the lifeboats.

The group then attended a studio and with music leaders created four music/sound pieces based on maritime history, the fishing industry and coastal environment. One track inspired by the natural landscape was called ‘The Calm Before the Storm.’ The pieces were broadcast on BBC Radio Tees which can attract over 151,000 weekly listeners. They were also part of an art installation in the York Place Gallery and showcased their work at the Wintertide festival (Figure 10).

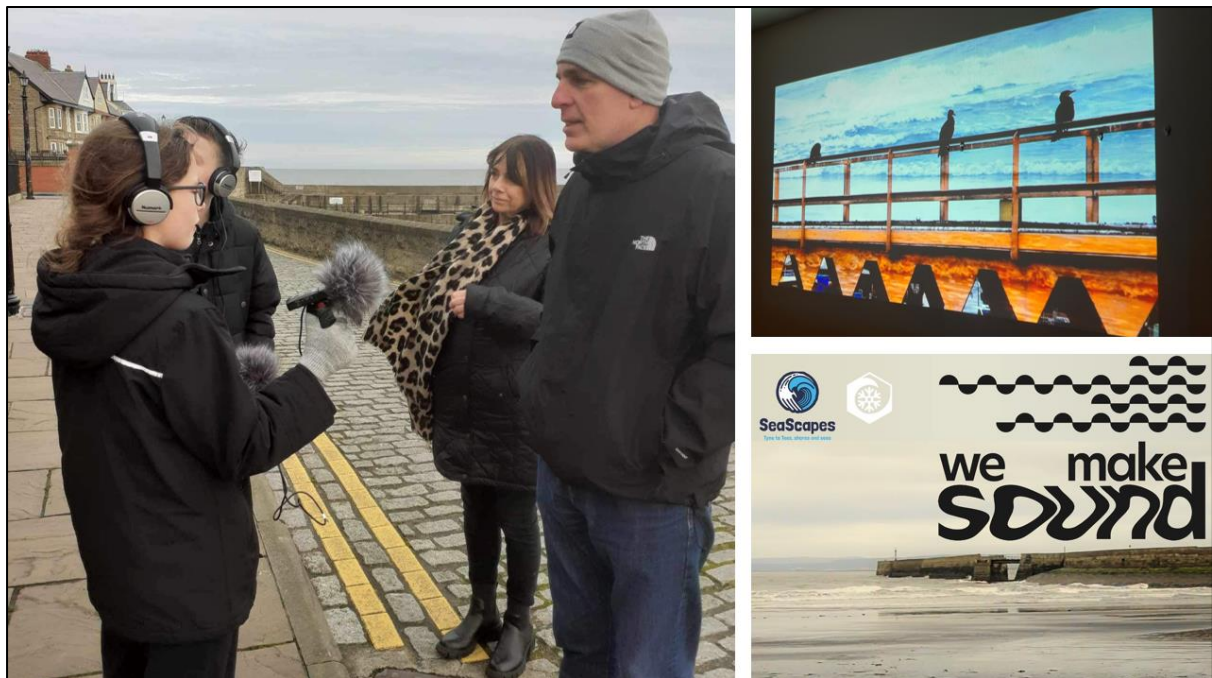


Figure 10 The We Make Sound group collecting sound recordings to produce music/sound tracks.

Organisation: The WHiST (Women’s Health in South Tyneside)

Webpage: [WHIST – Women's Health in South Tyneside](#)

Facebook Page: [WHiST \(Women's Health in South Tyneside\) Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Be the Sea (Theme: Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

The WHiST project brought together members to create a community choir. With a focus on the constantly changing environment, Sound artists collaborated with participants to collect recordings of non-human life from the coastal intertidal zone. Inspired by these sounds, members were encouraged to write their own lyrics and graphic scores for sound-making. This led to the development of unique compositions, including soundscape improvisations, which were new to the group (**Figure 11**).

The choir worked together to develop a co-created ‘storm’ soundscape, inspired by Storm Babet (October 2023), which affected South Shields during the project. The group successfully performed on two occasions including the Blue Futures exhibition at The Word. Performances enabled the choir to consolidate their collective stewardship for local marine life through the medium of sound and to share this with a wider audience to raise awareness of local marine wildlife.



Figure 11 The WHiST choir rehearsing their coastal inspired compositions and performing them to a public audience.

Round Three CGS Projects

Organisation: Sangini

Facebook Page: [Sangini A Friend Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Our Coast (Theme: Access to Sea, Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

Sangini delivered a community participatory arts project for members of the Srijoni Women's Group (1st & 2nd generation Bangladeshi women, Islamic Heritage) to engage with local marine heritage. Bringing together local artists, participants took part in workshops which delivered both social and artistic outcomes inspired by coastal walks and beach cleans. Activities included creative workshops of clay craft, acrylic painting, and felting. This produced informative artwork which included a three-dimensional canvas model which represented the impact of marine debris plastics and discarded fishing gear on coastal flora and fauna (**Figure 12**).

The community has a rich history of coastal heritage and memories from their childhood in Bangladesh but had previously felt they could not share this or engage with the local coast and marine environment. The project enabled the women to create pieces of art to share that represented Bangladeshi coastal habitats and made comparisons on the environmental issues that also threaten local UK marine habitats.



Figure 12 The Sangini group creating art work to compare local and Bangladeshi marine habitats and wildlife.

Organisation: Seaham Trinity Primary School

Webpage: [Seaham Trinity Primary School |](#)

Facebook Page: [Seaham Trinity Primary School | Facebook](#)

Project Name: *It is up to all of us to RESPECT our community (Theme: Blue Futures, Access to Sea)*

Pupils from Seaham Trinity Primary School took part in activities to raise awareness on how to care and protect their local coast. The project incorporated all areas of the curriculum and created learning experiences to educate and excite children about local marine flora and fauna (**Figure 13**). Using equipment purchased from the grant such as binoculars, magnifying glass, observation trays, and books, the pupils were able to record wildlife they found and create a sense of stewardship and optimism about their future.

During beach visits a key message was ***'Take only memories, leave only footprints.'*** This was demonstrated by making sand art structures with gardening tools, which did not impact local wildlife and would return to normal when the tide came in. Pupils also conducted litter picks to protect local habitats. As a legacy, the year 6 pupils were able to share their findings with the younger pupils who in turn will one day get the opportunity to use the equipment themselves on visits to the beach.

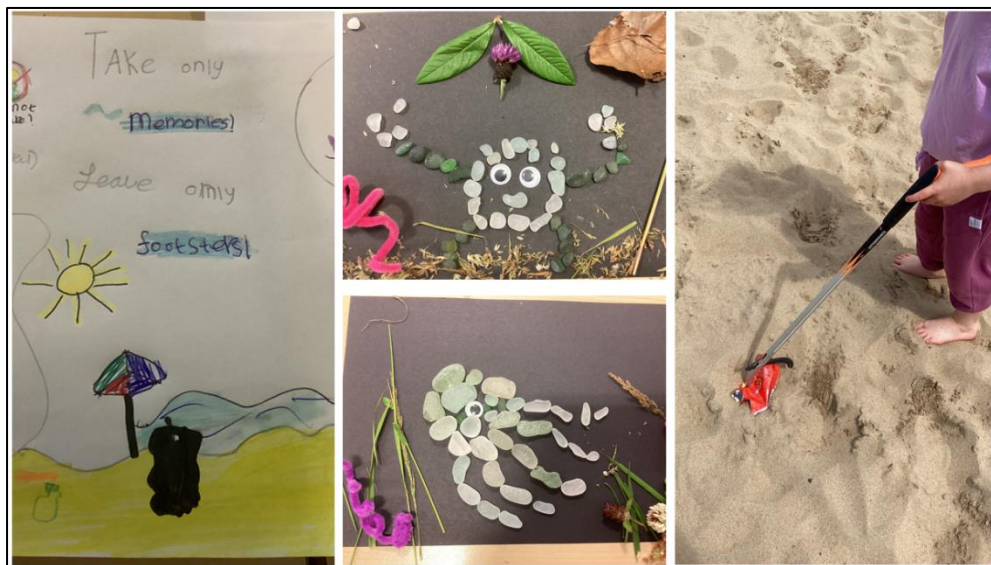


Figure 13 Trinity Primary School carrying out a beach clean and examples of the artwork they created.

Organisation: Moving Art Management

Webpage: [Moving Art Management | Dance Management](#)

Facebook Page: [Moving Art Management Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Blue Wave (Theme: Access to Sea)*

Moving Art Management delivered creative workshops designed to celebrate and connect people to the sights, sounds and smells of the Tyne to Tees Seascape. Participants from 'left behind' communities in County Durham visited Souter Lighthouse and took part in field recordings, mindfulness, and movement in a natural setting. They then crafted a personal response to the coastal environment using visual arts, dance, and sustainable costume-making (**Figure 14**).

The movement element stemmed from connecting with the physical body, the breath, and the senses, then allowing movement to emerge with prompts from the artist as to how to explore themes such as marine animals swimming and waves crashing. The project was also funded by the [National Trust](#) which helped deliver green space visits for a comparison to the coast, and by [Stronger Shores](#) which focuses on 3 species to prevent coastal erosion. The project will display artwork from the project and deliver a performance at a local exhibition in September 2024.



Figure 14 Moving Art Management visit to Souter Lighthouse and participants crafting a personal response to the coastal environment.

Organisation: Friends of Whitburn Library

Webpage: [Home \(whitburnlibrary.org.uk\)](http://whitburnlibrary.org.uk)

Facebook Page: [Friends of Whitburn Library Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Whitburn Sound Studios (Theme: Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

Whitburn Sound Stories was a series of workshops delivered by Friends of Whitburn library during the 2023 October half-term holidays. The workshops facilitated local sound recording and listening activities, and the gathering of stories and sound mixes to include on the previously created Whitburn Resonance 'Sound Dig' website - [Whitburn Resonance: Sound Dig](#).

The project worked with staff and volunteers to familiarise them with the Sound Dig resources installed on the library's computer and encourage them to highlight and share them with the public. During workshops local people's voices engaged in interviews and storytelling, and this was used as method for expanding narratives of Whitburn's past and present (**Figure 15**). The project put environmental sound changes, including wildlife, traffic, industrial and sea sounds into the public consciousness. This demonstrated another method for how people can experience the local marine environment.



Figure 15 A poster advertising the Whitburn Sound Stories workshops, and a recording session to interview local people.

Organisation: Girls Who Walk Sunderland

Facebook Page: [Girls Who Walk Sunderland Facebook](#)

Project Name: *Girls Who Walk Sunderland (Theme: Access to Sea)*

Girls Who Walk Sunderland provided coastal walks for their community-based group of women. The group uses social activities to inspire, combat isolation and loneliness, and create a safe place for women. The project supported with transport and refreshment costs to help tackle socioeconomic problems which had previously acted as a barrier. Walks along the [King Charles III England Coast Path](#) provided the opportunity to overobserve local heritage including visiting Souter Lighthouse, exploring the clifftops at Blackhall Rocks, and collecting sea glass at Seaham (**Figure 16**). Taking part in an open water swim at Roker, Sunderland, reinforced how nature supports healthy mental well-being and has inspired the planning of swimming lessons and future coastal swims. Combined with observing dolphins for the first time on another walk, the group have now become more aware of water pollution concerns and want to get more involved in local beach cleans.



Figure 16 The Girls who walk Sunderland visiting Souter and making artwork from sea glass collected at Seaham.

Organisation: Tern the Tide

Webpage:

Facebook Page:

Project Name: *Tern the Tide (Theme: Blue Future, Revealing Hidden Heritage)*

Tern the Tide is a group of volunteers passionate about protecting the rare ground nesting Little Terns which for the past three years have chosen the beaches of Seaton Carew as their breeding grounds. Volunteers conducted 24hr patrols of the fenced area to keep the birds safe from disturbance and thus increase the number of successful fledglings before the birds return to Africa (**Figure 17**). The grant has enabled the group to continue meeting throughout the year to be better prepared for the next season. The group are now in the process of creating a brochure for the public with information about their work and how to age a chick. The purchase of new binoculars not only improved watching efficiency but allowed members of the public to observe the chicks from a safe distance. This year the wardens recorded a total of 154 fledged little terns, of which 117 were ringed for future monitoring, and 28 fledged ringed plovers.



Figure 17 Volunteer wardens carrying out a patrol of the Little Tern fenced nesting site at Seaton Carew.

Organisation: The SeaWeSee

Webpage:

Facebook Page: [The SeaWeSee Facebook](#)

Project Name: The SeaWeSee (Theme: Blue Futures, Access to Sea)

The SeaWeSee with the support of [Durham Wildlife Trust](#) created a community of Coastal Rangers aged 8-14yrs from Seaham. The aim was to educate and create guardians for Seaham's coastline with a commitment to explore and protect its precious tidal habitats. Activities using the purchased identification cards included walk over rock pool surveys, coastal bird spotting, seaweed workshops, and cetacean spotting. The Coastal Rangers performed litter picks and shared their results with the Marine Conservation Society. They also learnt the importance of beach safety. Their work was shared on social media to shine a spotlight on the Seaham coast to inspire and help tackle the increasing amount of litter and anti-social behaviour which in turn will protect the amazing wildlife in the area.

The beach rangers have brought a new event available to our coastal area and the engagement has been great. The children have loved the excuse to get onto the beach and learn while playing. Being out in the open air is great for the physical and mental wellbeing as is absorbing new information.

The families that have attended the events have obtained an understanding of seasonal visitors and the litter that accumulates on a beach. They carried out 3 litter picks and 2 wildlife spotting sessions that consolidated this learning. The purchase of equipment for more activities in the coming years.