



**Canal &  
River Trust**

Making life better by water

# The Plastics Challenge

A quick guide to litter picking safely  
along your local canal or river



#PlasticsChallenge  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk/plastic](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/plastic)

## Introduction

# You can make a difference

Thank you for taking part in our **Plastics Challenge** and helping to make your local canal or river a beautiful place everyone can enjoy.

Staying close to your home has become more important than ever in recent times. We hope you've enjoyed exploring your local canal or river. Sadly, the amount of litter and plastics in and around our waterways is still an issue and we need your help to tackle the problem.

Plastics and litter on our canals and rivers are part of a much bigger global problem with over 500,000 pieces of plastic estimated to reach the ocean every year.

But together we can stop this. It's the little things we do on our doorstep that can make a world of difference. If everyone who visits one of our canals or rivers picks up just one piece of plastic, they'd be clear within a year.

Thank you for taking part in the Plastics Challenge.

Your small action is helping to make a big difference and your precious canals a place everyone can enjoy.



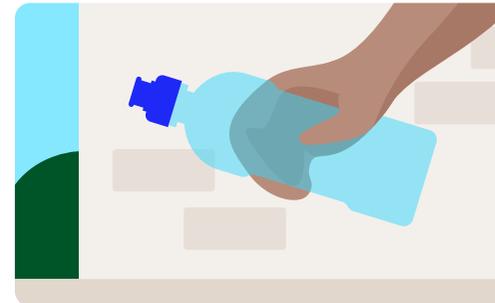
## 14 million

pieces of plastic end up in and around our canals and rivers every year



## £1 million

of charity funding is spent every year dealing with litter and fly-tipping



## 125,000

hours of volunteer time is spent picking up litter each year



## Zero

If everyone who visits our canals and rivers collects one piece of plastic, there'd be zero plastics left in a year

## Three simple steps

# How to complete the challenge

1

## Find a safe location

Decide where to do your Plastics Challenge – urban areas along a canal or river often have the most plastics and litter. However, spots around bridges and where people get on and off the towpath could be great spots to head to. Here's where to find your local canal or river [canalrivertrust.org.uk/local-to-you](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/local-to-you)

2

## Be prepared

Think about what you might need before heading out to take your Plastics Challenge – this could include:

- ✓ gloves or a litter picker if you have one
- ✓ hand wipes or sanitiser
- ✓ a bag to collect the plastics and litter to carry home and recycle
- ✓ camera or camera phone to take photos of your Plastics Challenge

3

## Share your story

Go for it! Take your Plastics Challenge by tagging @canalrivertrust and using the #PlasticsChallenge.



@canalrivertrust It felt good doing our bit to keep our local area nice. Such a beautiful outdoor space literally 5 mins up the road #PlasticsChallenge.



## Recycling

There are limited bins and recycling points along our canals and rivers so where possible please take what you've collected home and recycle what you can. Alternatively, find your nearest recycling centre when you're out and about. For more information visit our [Rubbish and Recycling](#) page online.

## Safety tips

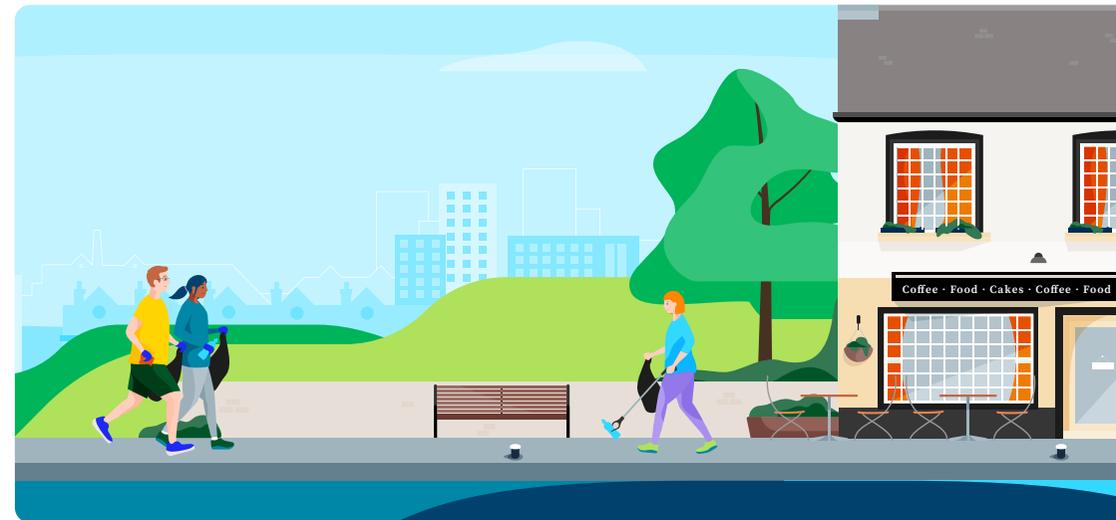
# Key pointers for litter pickers

## Remember

- ✓ If heading out alone to do your Plastics Challenge let someone know where you're going and what time you expect to be back.
- ✓ Please check current government guidelines on social distancing, and make sure you follow them. For more information, visit [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- ✓ Always use gloves, or a litter picker, to pick up plastics and litter and cover any cuts and grazes before you start.
- ✓ Wash your hands after the challenge and before you eat, drink or touch your face.
- ✓ Do play 'Spot the hazard' with any children and take a look through our 'Water safety pack' before taking them out on the challenge.

## Stay safe

- ✗ Don't reach into the water to collect any plastics or litter. Always stay away from the water's edge.
- ✗ Don't climb up or down any embankments, over any barriers restricting access, or try to reach the off side of the water.
- ✗ Don't reach into any areas that you cannot see clearly as there could be safety hazards.
- ✗ Don't touch sharp or jagged items, such as broken glass, and any bulky items which are too heavy to lift.
- ✗ Don't handle any sharps, needles, dead animals or dog poo.
- ✗ Don't take any risks. If you see anything dangerous, sharp, heavy or hazardous, do not pick it up. Report it to us on 0303 040 4040 or let us know at [canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us](https://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/contact-us)



Real stories

# Poppy and Eliza's plastics picking was anything but rubbish

**Poppy and Eliza were looking for fun things to do and decided to collect plastics and litter on the towpath.**

They aimed to fill at least one sack a day and tweeted daily updates.

"It was my idea to do the litter picking," said Poppy, "and I thought it sounded fun," added Eliza.

Poppy and Eliza want to continue picking up plastics and litter whenever they visit a canal.

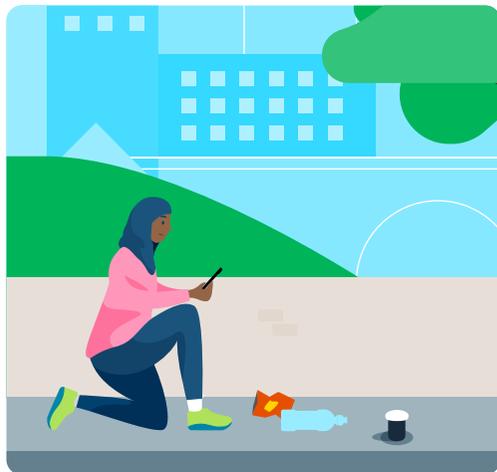


Stay connected

# Share your experience

## Share a photo

We'd love you to share photos of your Plastics Challenge via your social media, like Eliza and Poppy did. All you need to do is tag or mention @canalrivertrust and include #PlasticsChallenge in your caption.



### An impromptu litter pick

Peter Stelfox

"A full tub of #plastic, cans and polystyrene from the basins @NWMuseum and surrounds. Nice to see the wildflowers after the rain."

 65  40  24



### Enjoy your canal all year round

"It doesn't seem to matter if it's sunny or snowing, we use the canals whatever the weather... there's all the wildlife and it's just beautiful."

Lorraine, Kennet & Avon Canal

## Help make life better by water

Will you help us during this critical time to carry on protecting local waterways?

At this time, a stroll by our rivers and canals is more precious than ever before. But our waterways need care and maintenance to stay open.

Please help protect our waterways today  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk/donate](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/donate)



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River Trust**

Making life better by water

Keep in touch

# We'd love to keep in touch with you

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## Sign up!

Be the first to hear more  
#PlasticsChallenge news.

To keep up to date on what  
we're doing to tackle plastics  
and litter, and for lots of other  
news about how we're caring  
for your local canal or river,  
sign up to our newsletter at  
[canalrivertrust.org.uk/newsletter](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/newsletter)

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## Follow us

@canalrivertrust  
#PlasticsChallenge

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## Contact us

T: 0303 040 4040  
W: [canalrivertrust.org.uk/contactus](https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/contactus)

