

Hello

From Gerard Farnham

Beaches,

I am a dog walker mainly at St Ouens but occasionally St Aubins. Firstly, since I began walking the dog I have been amazed at the amount of rubbish accumulating on the beaches – mostly plastics and most obvious on rising tides, which indicates a large proportion is washed up, but there is quite a lot of fire, bbq and party rubbish during the summer too. I, and some other dog walkers I've noticed often pick up rubbish – especially the large or nasty stuff like polystyrene as it seems wrong to simply leave it there but obviously we can't collect it all. BBC Radio 4 last week aired a programme about the accumulation of plastic rubbish in the sea <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00v1qtn> which is a worldwide and very serious problem. I know that initially the issue here would seem not how it came to be there but what to do with it when it ends up on our beaches. However after a walk on St Aubins last Saturday (2/10/10) I think the problem does encompass where its coming from as well. I was walking along the waterline and after a while realised that amongst all the seaweed there was actually an awful lot of floating rubbish so I started to take note and in perhaps 400 yards i saw many dozens of pieces of floating rubbish. Not just the ubiquitous plastic bottles but amongst other things 3 tampon applicators, 1 sanitary towel and all sorts of sweet wrappers and small plastic waste.

When the beaches were regularly cleaned they may have been artificially tidy but with nature depositing seaweed on the beaches in a random and sometimes untidy way, having litter added makes the mess seem dirtier and the beaches much less appealing – quite worrying for an economy and industry reliant on the coastal environment. Add to that flotsam that strongly suggests sewerage and we may as well go home. Oh, but hang on, we are home. This is our home and I am very unhappy to say I would truly not want to walk along the waterline again at St Aubins. It was disgusting. I am heart sick to see our environment in such a bad way.

So, if everything I've seen is simply other peoples rubbish washed up, we need to worry about the sea itself and reinstate some beach cleaning, and if it isn't all washed up from elsewhere we need to find out why St Aubins looks like a sewer.

As well as the actual litter I have other observations relating to the beaches. Beach parties are great and I wouldn't want to stop young people having them – there are precious few open places for them as it is, but perhaps working on improving a sense of care for the beaches could be worthwhile, without trying to simply "police" the fun out of everything. Something we're too fond of here already. Also, with the growth of coastal sports, there are more and more 4x4s driving around on the beaches. Necessary in some cases I suppose, but the beaches are our one haven from the outside world, and some 4x4 owners seem to ignore the rules and consider it ok to drive on beaches in the evenings to set up base for their gigantic bbqs – They can often be seen in the evenings in the summer at Le Braye and at L'etacq.

I recently asked some lifeguards to turn off some loud rave music they were playing whilst parked on the beach on a Sunday afternoon. They looked at me like I was being pathetic, but after giving it some thought I realised that we all want to appreciate the beaches, enjoy the environment and for many, to get away from it all for a while, so I feel justified in wanting to

defend the peaceful nature of the place and with all of this, the rubbish, the cars on the beaches, we're losing it – We could say it is slipping slowly into the sea.

As for what to do,

1. The absence of beach cleaning is having a cumulative effect and it looks as though something needs to be done. What about community service? Why send workers to charity shops, make them pick up litter. And if anyone objects due to some health and safety risk, tell them to grow up and get some common sense.
2. Policing – In America they have beach police – but God knows we've enough people wanting authority here as it is, so not that, but perhaps better awareness, encourage better care, perhaps ban glass from the beach, and less tolerance of abuse – perhaps post a telephone number to call to get support from the parish or police for beach issues.
3. Find out the source of the particularly unpleasant and sheer volume of flotsam in St Aubins.

Regarding Parks

Some parks are rendered inaccessible at times due to undesirables spending their days drinking in them. Ban alcohol in parks.

If there is anything I can do to help further I would happily volunteer some time to help as I feel very strongly about this.

Sincerely

Gerard Farnham