



KEEP PLETT CLEAN CAMPAIGN (KPCC)

The campaign was started in March 2014 by a group of caring individuals, under the leadership of Alison Bryant, who picked up litter in Main Street, Plettenberg Bay. The town was full of litter, grass was growing on kerbs and there was serious litter dumping in bushes at various places. This team of individuals started to meet at The Grand Hotel in Main Street at 5.15 pm on Tuesdays to clean nominated areas around town. For the first year or so it was difficult to decide where to clean as there were just too many problem areas. The team persisted and gradually started to see improvement. It has been a remarkable experience as the volume of litter has reduced over the years. This core team, with some new members, have remained active and enthusiastic since the campaign's inception and the Tuesday evening gatherings are now an institution. Some days the team are even joined by younger family members!

What is the purpose of the campaign? From the start the aim was to create a clean and fresh looking town so that locals could be proud of it and visitors, local and foreign, would find Plettenberg Bay a pleasant and attractive holiday destination. Plettenberg Bay is in competition with other tourist destinations and tourism is its most important industry. If the number of visitors to Plettenberg Bay is increased, tourism employment is increased for the people of the town. A significant benefit of a litter free environment is the prevention of plastic finding its way into the sea. The campaign seeks to inspire Plett residents to be proud of the town in which they have the privilege of living.

Who drives the program? The driving force has been the 'never-sit-still-or-relax' Alison Bryant, whose vision is the clean and fresh town. First thing every morning Alison takes an inspection drive through town looking for littered areas. This continues during the day whilst doing the rounds of her business which fits in well with the needs of the campaign. She picks up every single piece of litter she comes across when walking and when driving she stops along roads for isolated litter. Whilst she has the support of a wider group of individuals, she essentially took on this town single-handedly which, in itself, is unique. She is a real 'in the moment person' who puts things into action immediately.



Alison is ably supported by her 'second-in-command', David Scott. David and Alison generally share duties and have interchangeable roles. He is also the campaign's handy man and attempts to keep the bins in a tidy condition by replacing them if they lose their fresh appearance. As the campaign has grown, David's support to Alison has been key and hugely appreciated. A key benefit is having two persons to share the responsibility and be able to stand in for each other.



The campaign employs two cleaning staff who come in every day except Sunday. It is remarkable that both these labourers walk at least 10km per day whilst litter-picking and, together with Alison, their boundless energy and enthusiasm is noticeable. This can probably be attributed to Alison's incredible leadership style. One of the staff, Benson, has been with the campaign almost since its inception.

The group is in touch on Whatsapp and report problem areas when they see them. Beyond the core cleaning group are other persons who, whilst not actively cleaning, report dumping and littering sites.

At the start the core group funded the wages for the workers, but soon a system was set up whereby anyone could contribute and more recently Spar Eastern Cape, through local Spar owner Duncan Brown, stepped in and sponsor the staff cost. Initially the group picked up litter by hand but they then started to buy 'pickers' which were sold at a small profit to collect money for staff and other costs. Alison manages the finances and is constantly on the drive for donations.

The 'Keep Plett Clean' refuse bins are all over town – Alison found this detergent importer who discarded large blue drums which he gave to her and she started placing these drums around town. There are now approximately 80 of these bins in circulation. The campaign has a good relationship with the local Waste Management department who supply refuse bags. The campaign records bag usage which averages around 34 bags per day, rising to 43 during holiday seasons!

The campaign has a logo which was developed by Alison and all the campaign's refuse bins carry the logo, as well as clothing worn by the cleaning staff and bibs worn by the Tuesday evening team. Local car guards are now also wearing branded yellow bibs on condition they pick up litter in the area immediately surrounding the area they 'guard'.

Alison has also motivated local garden service companies to create pavement gardens .

What does the campaign do? The campaign is not just about picking up litter in the streets – the team do many things which are listed below: The Tuesday cleaning by the core team and town cleaning by the cleaning staff are important but in addition the campaign gives attention to the following:

- Inspects the town and receives reports from locals which assists to focus effort.
- Inspects areas outside town such as the Wittedrif and airport roads which accumulate litter rapidly. These are cleaned as often as possible but do stretch resources.
- Cleans in detail - this means picking up cigarette butts, straws, bottle tops etc and also entails searching for litter under bushes, in flower beds and in the bush.
- Weeds throughout town, including trimming of kerbs.
- Paints walls in the Main Street in front of parking bays, including sourcing paint donations.
- Speaks to people involved when they can pinpoint the source of dumping. This is often a townhouse or flat complex or restaurant and generally they respond positively to clean up pleas.
- Attends meetings where the interests of the Keep Plett Clean Campaign can be represented. Alison liaises with and has the support of Ward Councillors and also attends the local Ward Council Meetings on behalf of the campaign.
- Keeps a watch on heritage sites and viewpoints where tourist busses visit and cleans them especially below the viewing platforms where municipal workers do not seem to venture (The Piesang River, Signal Hill, The Timberstore, The Harker Graves, The van Plettenberg VOC Beacon and the viewing deck in Hopwood Street).
- Maintains positive relations with Plettenberg Bay Waste Management department which assists in maintaining an awareness of the need to have a clean town.
- Keeps the Piesang River at the Odland braai area clean by at times paddling out on kayaks to retrieve floating litter or bottles.
- Speaks to homeless people who are a major source of litter in the bush. This is difficult because at certain times (holiday season and winter) there is an influx of new people who do not care much for our environment.
- Submits articles on a regular basis to local press and comment on Facebook where relevant.

One of the largest clean up days by the core team, who are often joined by others on this occasion, is the clean-up of the picnic and surrounding areas after New Year's Eve – this is an extraordinary large eyesore and is cleaned by 9am the morning after – an enormous and well received accomplishment.

The 'Keep Plett Clean' campaign really functions at grass root level and has made many in the town acutely aware of litter, dumping and waste. Many have a don't-care attitude that creates the litter

problem. Homeowners, general public, restaurants, fishermen and vehicle occupants are all guilty of discarding plastic, litter, and other waste especially in high traffic areas and along roads. Since the inception of this campaign there has been a definite improvement in the attitude of people in Plett, as well as the municipal staff - but a great deal still needs to be done to reduce the required clean up.

In summary, the campaign has achieved much of the aim of a clean and fresh town - it is not perfect – and a final measure of Alison and her team’s success will be if, in time to come, the municipality manages to keep the town completely litter and dumping free. The Plett Keep Plett Clean Campaign is an example to other towns and can easily be replicated across South Africa with the right leadership!

(end)

Core team members representing the Keep Plett Clean Campaign at the NSRI beach clean up day



The KPCC cleaning staff next to one of the campaign’s litter bins



Representing the KPCC at the Nature’s Valley Trust clean up day – joined by younger family members!