

The logo for the North West Coastal Forum, featuring a stylized green wave above the text and a blue wave below it.

north west coastal forum

A wide-angle photograph of a coastal landscape at sunset. The foreground is a vast, flat beach with intricate sand patterns. The middle ground shows the ocean with a line of wind turbines on the horizon. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, with the sun breaking through near the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the water.

**The 2023
North West Awards
for Coastal Excellence**

The 2023 NW ACE

The 2023 Award winners were announced by Caroline Salthouse, the Manager of the North West Coastal Forum at the '***Climate Change on the NW Coast: Challenges facing coastal communities and working with nature to adapt to coastal change***' which took place on the 29th and 30th March in Grange-over-Sands.

This year's Awards have been funded through the Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) initiative, which is led by the Environment Agency with support from Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation and the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities.

3Cs is a collaboration seeking to explore how to enhance and progress coordination for coastal sustainability and resilience in England and has 3 themes:

- ★ Coordination of planning and delivery of locally owned plans
- ★ Coastal Champions to strengthen capacity and capability
- ★ Restoration and recovery of natural habitats

The Awards Scheme

- ★ Established by the North West Coastal Forum in 2010
- ★ To recognise and celebrate outstanding achievement in and contribution to the long-term sustainable management of our coastal and near-shore marine environments
- ★ Set up to encourage and inspire professionals, volunteers, groups and organisations involved in coastal work
- ★ To spread the word about good practice throughout the North West – and beyond!
- ★ Work should help to meet the aim and objectives of the North West Coastal Forum
- ★ For work done in the last 2 years

Aim and objectives of NWCF

To promote and deliver integrated coastal zone management to secure the long-term sustainability of the North West coast by achieving:

- ★ Well-integrated planning and management of the coastal zone
- ★ The economic potential of the NW coast achieved in ways which safeguard, enhance, restore and sustainably use our natural and cultural assets
- ★ Improved well-being of coastal communities
- ★ A high quality natural and built coastal environment able to adapt to climate and other change
- ★ Improved recreational opportunities and visitor experience
- ★ Raised appreciation of the coast, its values and its needs

Award categories

Coastal Champion

Key criteria:

- ★ Significant contribution to coastal sustainability
- ★ Leadership
- ★ Being an inspiration to others

Coastal Community Action

Key criteria:

- ★ Significant contribution to community benefit and the coast arising from the work carried out

Coastal Best Practice

Key criteria:

- ★ Significant benefits to coast and/or near-shore marine environments and local communities and businesses arising from the work carried out
- ★ Significant contribution to long-term coastal sustainability

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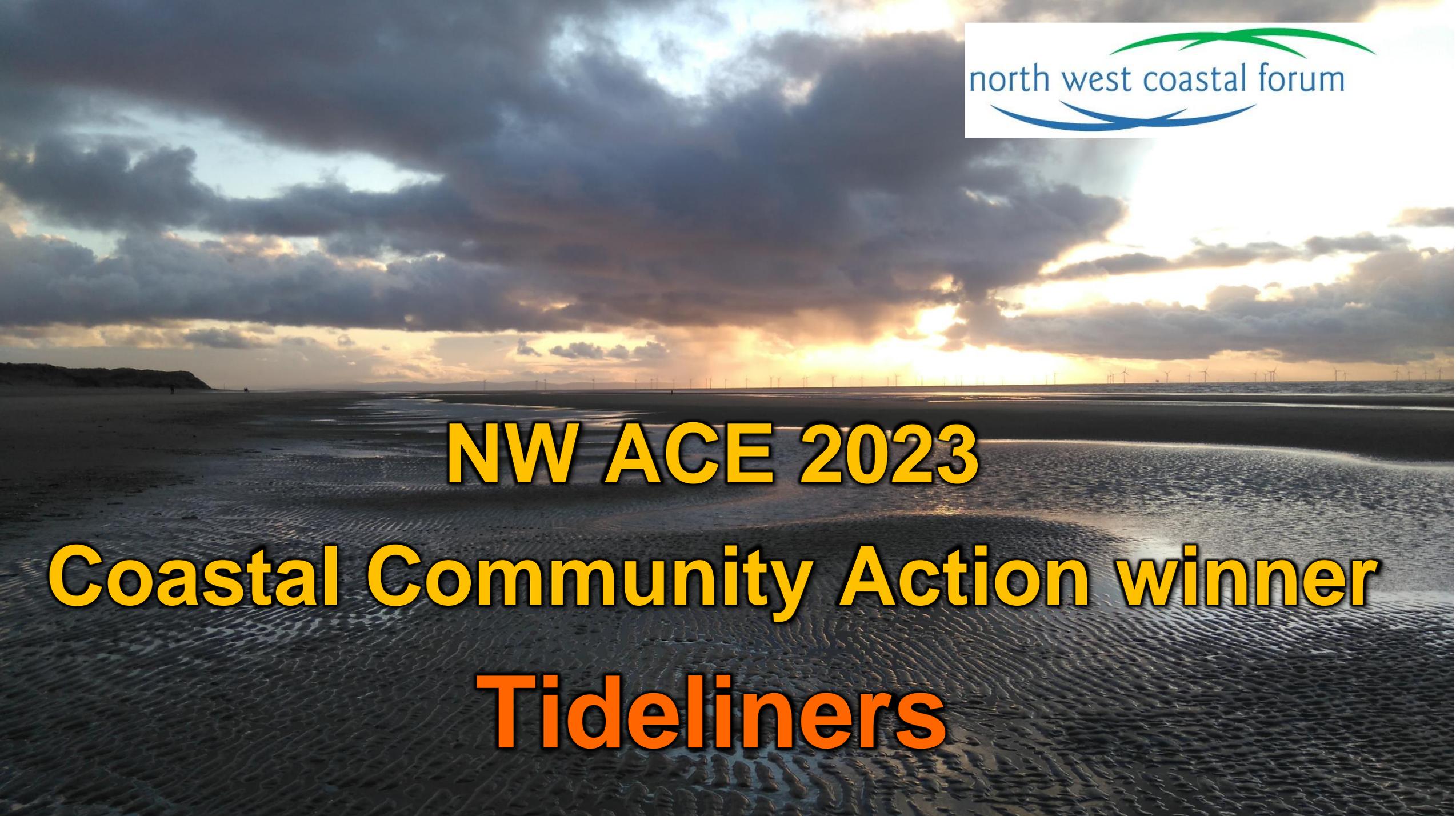
A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds, with the sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow. In the distance, a long line of wind turbines stretches across the horizon. The foreground shows the wet sand of the beach, reflecting the light from the sky.

NW ACE 2023

The Winners!

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A wide-angle photograph of a coastal landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, with the sun low on the horizon, casting a golden glow. In the distance, a line of wind turbines is visible against the horizon. The foreground shows a sandy beach with intricate, wavy patterns in the sand, reflecting the light from the sky.

NW ACE 2023

Coastal Community Action winner

Tideliners

TIDELINERS

Coastal Community Action Winner 2023



Tideliners is a litter picking community group focusing on the Keer Estuary, Morecambe Bay (Warton/Carnforth area).

The group was established and continues to be led by Diane Sammons. Set up during lockdown in 2020, with equipment provided by Morecambe Bay Partnership, they are described on their nomination form as:

‘a small but mighty group of coastal champions.’

A group of 5 or 6 volunteers goes out every Monday and carries out beach cleans along the Keer estuary covering up to 3km each time - but that’s not all they do!

They have a real passion for making a difference to their local environment and have been particularly effective at reaching out to their local community and engaging young people as part of an ‘Eco-Gang’.

They also ‘go the extra mile’ engaging wider businesses and community members to clear particular grot spots or challenges.

TIDELINERS

Coastal Community Action Winner 2023



Key achievements:

- ★ Clearing a quarter of a tonne of litter and plastic (mid-2020 to mid-2022)
- ★ Providing an opportunity for local people to stay active and be outdoors during the pandemic and enhancing community cohesion during challenging times - a lockdown success story
- ★ Setting up the 'Eco-Gang' particularly encouraging participation and awareness of plastic pollution and other eco-matters with disadvantaged young people.
- ★ Reaching out to local businesses such as caravan parks to target nearby grot spots
- ★ Connecting with local farmers to clear plastic waste stuck in hedges
- ★ Connecting with local events companies to minimise single-use plastics at their regular events.
- ★ Regularly campaigning on environmental matters – including plastic pollution and encouraging local businesses to be more eco-friendly.

TIDELINERS

Coastal Community Action Winner 2023

Working on a purely voluntary basis Diane and other group members have connected with young people in schools and in the care system to ensure opportunities are available to as many as possible to make a difference, to understand the challenge of litter and plastic, and raise awareness of the impact it has on our environment and wildlife.



Left: child's illustration

Right: Diane Sammons with MBP Partnership Engagement Officer, Lauren Munro-Bennett



NW ACE 2023

Coastal Best Practice winner

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023



- ★ A partnership project between the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Blackpool and Fylde Councils, with a wider Steering Group including Environment Agency, GeoLancashire and Natural England.
- ★ The project is led by Blackpool Council and Fylde Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust are the delivery bodies.
- ★ The Project started in 2008, using funds from Fylde Council, SITA Enriching Nature, Lancashire Environmental Fund & Lancashire County Council.
- ★ Currently it has Environment Agency FCERM funding to

‘resolve significant issues of the past and to re-establish a healthy and resilient coastal strip in the light of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency’

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023

The project involves future-proofing the dune system and community - in the face of predicted sea level rise and the climate change impacts already being experienced - by working with natural processes to widen the dunes seawards up to their natural limit to:

- ★ provide a sustainable sea defence
- ★ create a diverse and resilient ecosystem
- ★ contribute towards a climate resilient coast.

In addition, work is also being undertaken on a range of associated action including managing pedestrian access, controlling invasive species, improving coastal habitats and expanding monitoring data. These works are being undertaken with the community, engaging with stakeholders to improve their appreciation and understanding of the dune habitat, its benefits and management.

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023

- ★ The project area covers 8km of foreshore from Starr Gate in Blackpool to Lytham Green in Fylde - over 80ha of sand dune habitat plus, maritime grassland and intertidal habitats of saltmarsh and beach down to mean low water.
- ★ The dunes contain both a biological and a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) , a County Biological & Geological Heritage Site and Lytham St Anne's Local Nature Reserve. They adjoin the internationally important Ribble Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.
- ★ Importantly the geographical reach is much wider due to the interaction with local communities and the visitors from across the North West that visit Fylde and its dunes and take part in events.
- ★ The dunes act as a natural coastal defence for much of the South Fylde coast. When the project started, coastal squeeze had reduced the dunes to a critical point - over 400 houses, key road and rail links were under imminent threat of severe damage and/or flooding from coastal storm action.

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023

Key achievements:

- ★ The dunes have been restored to a natural functioning system, reversing the degradation and loss of dune habitat e.g. re-establishment of the dune width up to 90m seaward at the most vulnerable point in front of North Beach Car Park, more generally the dune front is expanding seawards at an average of 5-10m/year, the work is delivering key actions in SMP2.
- ★ Fylde Council have changed beach management practices to support natural dune processes, e.g. stopping mechanical strand line removal allowing pioneer plant species to establish and enable new dune accretion and a healthy frontal dune ecosystem.
- ★ Risk levels for flooding are far less than before the works for 400 properties and 400 new properties that will benefit from the protection of the sand dunes in the future.

2005



2021



Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023

Key achievements continued:

- ★ Establishment of a programme of invasive species and scrub removal (Japanese rose and White poplar in particular) and other habitat management works - the dunes SSSI has been reclassified from 'unfavourable' condition to 'unfavourable recovering' condition by Natural England.
- ★ Reintroduction of over 400 sand lizards since 2018, working with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, with successful breeding across the site. The Fylde dunes are the most northerly site in England for sand lizard - England's rarest lizard.
- ★ Establishment of a public engagement programme to raise awareness and promote sustainability - including coastal events, volunteer workshops, corporate work parties, and online through a variety of different social media platforms.

Fylde Sand Dunes Project

Coastal Best Practice Winner 2023

Key achievements continued:

Since 2015 the project has

- ★ Engaged with over 12,000 people through a variety of coastal events
- ★ Engaged with over 5,000 students via education sessions and Beach Schools, and a range of academic projects and placements with Lancaster and Edge Hill Universities and Blackpool & Fylde College.
- ★ Hosted weekly volunteer work parties - over 1,200 regular volunteers contributing 10,000+ hours; the volunteering opportunities provide skills training
- ★ Hosted corporate work parties to raise awareness of environmental issues to local businesses. Over 25 local businesses have contributed 1000+ hours
- ★ Engaged with over 10,000 people from all over the world through a variety of social media platforms online.



The Fylde Sand Lizard



Sand lizards are the UK's rarest lizard and one of the rarest reptiles in the country. They can be found living in sand dunes and heathlands around the UK but their habitat is threatened and their population is declining in many areas.

Did you know?

The Fylde sand lizards are the most northerly population in England...

Sand lizards can live for up to 20 years. Males in summer become a bright green colour in attempts to attract females. They can grow to 20cm in length and like many lizards can shed their tail to distract predators as they make their escape.

Did you know?

Sand lizards are great diggers and lay their eggs 7cm deep in the sand. They also hibernate over winter in burrows they dig in to the dunes, which can be up to 1m in depth, emerging in the following spring.



Between 2018 and 2021 four hundred and twelve sand lizards were released on to the Fylde dunes. With the help of ARC Trust licenced breeders the project was able to reintroduce these amazing animals.

Did you Know?

Sand lizards are protected by law, therefore it is illegal to knowingly touch, harm or kill them.



For more information about the 2023 awards and previous winners visit: www.nwcoastalforum.org.uk



CONGRATULATIONS!
to all the NW ACE 2023 winners