

Press Release

Partnership approach drives fishing gear recycling and coastal clean-up across East Anglia

- Initiative developed in discussion with the fishing community and delivered in partnership with environmental organisations, regulators and local authorities
- Nearly four tonnes of end-of-life fishing gear collected at Lowestoft and Southwold events further recycling days planned in King's Lynn
- 43 beach cleans delivered across 10 locations, removing 1,195 bags of litter (3,988kg) from the East Anglian coastline in 2025

Swindon, 17 March 2026

An innovative collaboration, sponsored by the East Coast's leading offshore wind company RWE, is delivering two complementary environmental initiatives: a project to collect and recycle unwanted fishing gear and a separate programme of beach cleans to help reduce the amount of litter on the region's beaches.

Developed in discussion with representatives from the fishing community, the initiative is delivered in partnership with environmental organisations, fisheries regulators and local authorities. The scheme expands recycling options for unwanted nets, ropes, pots and fish boxes and forms part of a wider 2026 programme along the East Anglian coast.

The initiative was originally supported by Haskoning, an environmental consultancy that secured UK Government approval and, alongside the Eastern and Southern Plastics Coalition, has coordinated delivery of the programme.

Jon Darling, RWE project director for Vanguard West and East, said: "Offshore wind development provides new opportunities for collaboration that extend beyond clean energy generation. Through partnerships with local authorities, regulators and community organisations, we are pleased to support initiatives that reduce waste, protect marine ecosystems and promote responsible, sustainable development along the East Anglian coast."

The response from the fishing community has been extremely positive, with strong participation. Two successful events have already taken place, the first, held in Lowestoft early in 2025, was followed by an event in Southwold, bringing the combined total of recovered fishing gear to more than four tonnes. All materials are reprocessed for use in new, sustainable

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products.

Recovered trawl netting is processed into plastic pellets that can be used in the manufacture of a range of new products. Products such as furniture, footwear, sheds, planters, bins and bodyboards are all created from the waste materials sourced from the harbours.

Alongside the recycling programme, RWE supports wider efforts for beach cleans across the East Anglian coast, working in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy's Beach Clean Ambassador Programme. Volunteers have delivered 43 cleans at 10 locations, collecting 1,195 bags of litter weighing a total of 3,988 kilograms.

Take part:

The next fishing gear recycling events will take place at the Port of King's Lynn from **Monday 16 March to Wednesday 25 March**. The address for deposits is: 36 Cross Bank Road, (Shelter at the Fleet), Alexandra Dock, **what3words:** ///land.zooms.radar. Accepted materials include trawl and dolly nets, monofilament nets, rope, plastic pots, pot markers and fish crates. Further information on accepted materials is available from EIFCA on 01553 775321. For more information about the fishing gear recycling project, or to discuss opportunities to take part in future collection events, contact the Vanguard West, East and Boreas [project team](#).

Partners in the initiative:

Jon Butler, Assistant Chief Officer of Eastern IFCA said: "Eastern IFCA is pleased to support this joint initiative, which is making a practical difference along the East Anglian coast. It's positive to see fishermen taking the opportunity to dispose of old gear responsibly. Working together in this way helps reduce potential marine litter, protect local habitats and support a sustainable future for our inshore fisheries."

Neil Hembrow, Ocean Recovery Manager at Keep Britain Tidy said: "We are looking forward to supporting the fishing community again on the East Coast. We utilise the innovative techniques of British recyclers who have invested in the technologies to tackle this difficult to recycle material. Working as a team, from the harbour to the plastic processor, it's an example of how positive collaboration can protect the marine environment."

"This work forms part of the benthic compensation commitments for RWE's Vanguard West, East and Boreas offshore wind projects and aims to reduce marine debris while safeguarding seabed habitats. Continued collaboration between the offshore wind sector, environmental bodies, fisheries regulators, and local partners remains central to its success."

Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk Council cabinet member for the Environment said: "We are proud to have been part of this innovative project to recycle end-of-life fishing gear, which, if abandoned, could have posed a threat to marine life. With the continued participation of the commercial fishing community, we can all work towards protecting the future of our marine environment."



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