

Bathing Water Profile for Sandyhills

Sandyhills, Scotland

Current water classification <https://www2.sepa.org.uk/BathingWaters/Classifications.aspx>

Today's water quality forecast <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/bathingwaters/Predictions.aspx>

Description

Sandyhills bathing water is a small, shallow bay, about 1 km long. It is situated to the south of Dalbeattie in Dumfries & Galloway.

The arc of fine sand slopes gently towards the water. At high tide, the distance to the water's edge is approximately 50 metres. At low tide, there is a sandy area for approximately 200 metres



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Sandyhills also has an unusual tidal regime which can be dangerous for beach users. Mud flats are exposed at low tide, making the water's edge difficult to access in certain areas. Low tide also exposes areas of quicksand. Please check the local tide information for further details:

<http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/EasyTide/>

Site details

Local authority	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Year of designation	1987
Water sampling location	NX 89200 55100

Catchment description

A catchment area of 55 km² drains into Sandyhills bathing water. Boreland Hill lies to the north east of the bathing water catchment. The main rivers are the Barnhourie Burn (Fairgirth Lane) and Southwick Burn. The smaller Cairngill Burn also flows directly onto the beach.

Grassland is the major land use in the catchment. The upland areas support mixed sheep and beef farming while the lowlands are used for intensive dairy farming. Approximately 1% of the bathing water catchment is urban. The main population centre is Sandyhills village, situated next to the bathing water. Population density outside of Sandyhills is low.

Average summer rainfall for the region is 356 mm compared to 331 mm across Scotland as a whole.

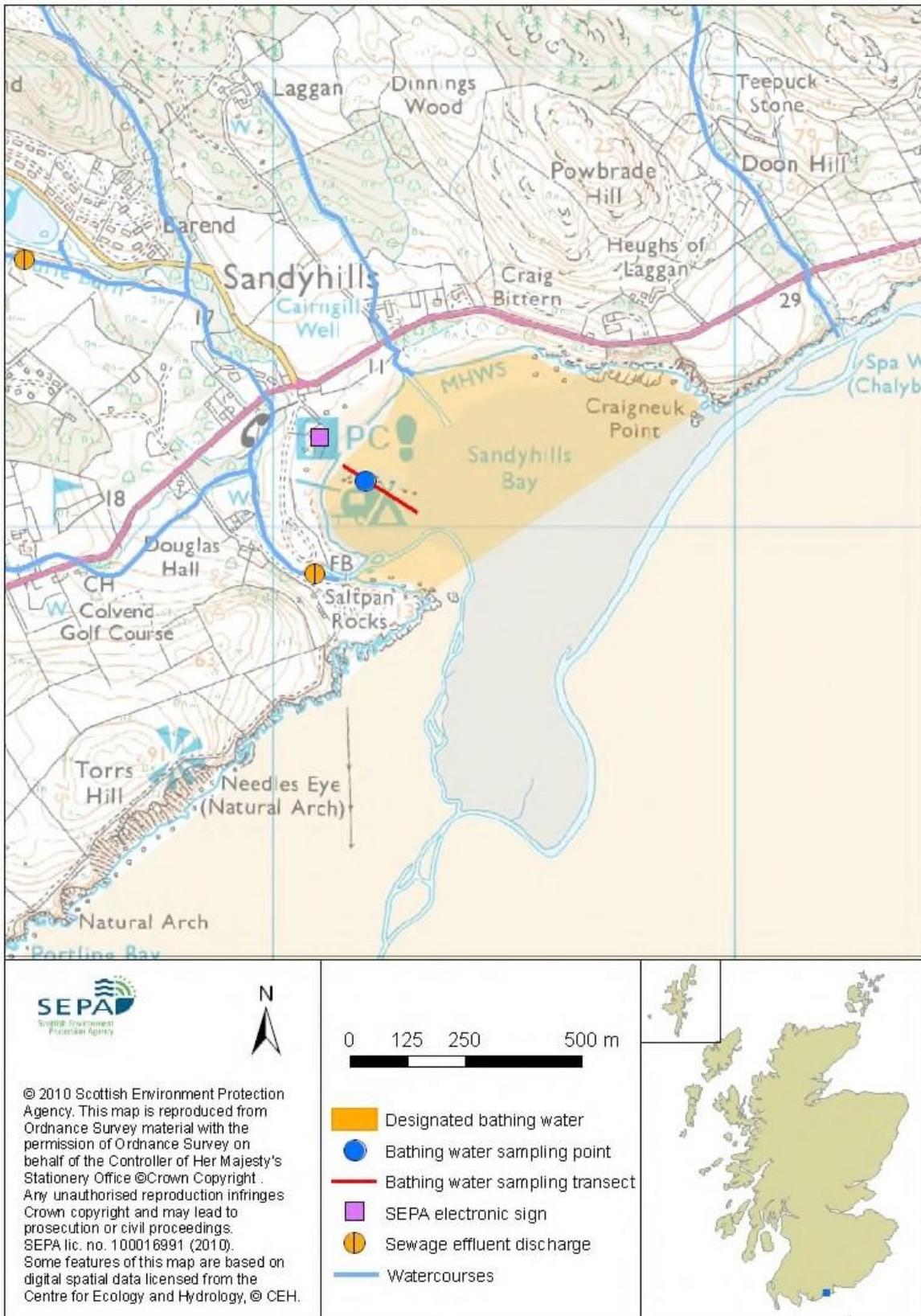
Risks to water quality

This bathing water is subject to short term pollution when heavy rainfall washes contaminants into the sea.

Bathing is not advised during or 1-2 days after heavy rainfall. This is due to the risk to bathers' health from water pollution.

DNA tracing indicates that animal sources are contributing to faecal pollution of the bathing water.

Map 1: Sandyhills bathing water



Map 2: Catchment draining into Sandyhills bathing water



Daily water quality forecasts

Water quality is forecast on a daily basis during the bathing season (1 June to 15 September). The forecasts indicate water quality is either acceptable or poor. Warnings against bathing are advised when poor water quality is forecast. This is because there is an increased risk to bathers' health from water pollution.

Forecasts are communicated via an electronic message sign at the beach, SEPA's website, mobile website and Beachline (03000 996699).

Improving bathing water quality

Improving diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

Diffuse pollution from agricultural sources is the result of rain driven events causing cumulative inputs of pollutants to rivers and streams.

There is potential for agricultural diffuse pollution to occur in the Fairgirth Lane and Southwick Burn which could impact on the bathing beach during and following heavy rain.

Sandyhills is part of the Stewartry Coastal catchment. All agricultural compliance work has been completed in this bathing water catchment. SEPA are content all farms are in a compliant state and will continue to engage with farmers and the NFUS to remind them of good practice when applying slurries and manures and grazing livestock.

A study of Sandyhills Bay was carried out by the Centre for Research into Environment and Health (CREH) in 2014. It concluded that there is a connectivity of microbial pollutants between nearby rivers and the bathing water. In addition, it determined that sediments in Sandyhills Bay act as a microbial pollutant store. Remobilisation of sediments along with microbial pollutants is thought to affect water quality. CREH also concluded that tidal movements affected concentrations of microbial pollutants in the bay.

Improving pollution from sewage and other discharges

Private sewage treatment systems from a caravan park and a chalet park are located within the bathing water catchment area. Both sites are on SEPA's monitoring programme to ensure compliance with licence conditions. Effluent from the caravan park is treated before being discharged into a soakaway system adjacent to the Barnhourie Burn. The chalet park effluent is treated before being discharged to the Barnhourie Burn.

Information on private sewage treatment systems in the catchment has been collated and is currently being assessed by SEPA staff.

Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae)

Marine waters are not at risk of cyanobacteria overproduction.

Algae

Current information suggests that this bathing water is not at risk of excessive growth of macroalgae (seaweed) or phytoplankton.

Jellyfish

There is a possibility of increased numbers of jellyfish in the water during summer months. This is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Most species common to the UK are harmless. The Marine Conservation Society advises to 'look but don't touch'.

Responding to pollution incidents

Please use our 24 hour hotline (0800 80 70 60) to report pollution. SEPA will investigate the incident and contact other relevant organisations. That may include Scottish Ministers, Scottish Water, the local authority and the relevant health board. Where necessary, measures will be put in place to resolve the problem.

If beach users or bathers are considered to be at risk, the local authority will warn the public by erecting signs at the bathing water. Information will also be available on our website.

SEPA will investigate whenever our sampling identifies pollution. Further sampling of the bathing water and related rivers and streams is undertaken.

Beach users are encouraged to use the bins provided or to take litter home. Beach cleaning and litter clean-up is maintained by Dumfries & Galloway Council for this bathing water.

Contact details and information sources

<p>SEPA Dumfries office</p> <p>Irongray Road Dumfries Dumfries and Galloway DG2 0JE 01387 720502 www.sepa.org.uk</p>	<p>Dumfries and Galloway Council</p> <p>Council Offices English Street Dumfries DG1 2DD 0303 333 3000 cis@dumgal.gov.uk www.dumgal.gov.uk</p>	<p>Keep Scotland Beautiful</p> <p>01786 471333 beach@ksbscotland.org.uk www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org</p>
<p>Scottish Government</p> <p>Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ 0131 244 0396 eqcat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Water/15561/bathingwaters</p>		

Version number:	Date:	Next review due:
1.2	April 2013	
1.3	March 2014	
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1.5	May 2016	
1.6	May 2017	
1.7	June 2018	
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