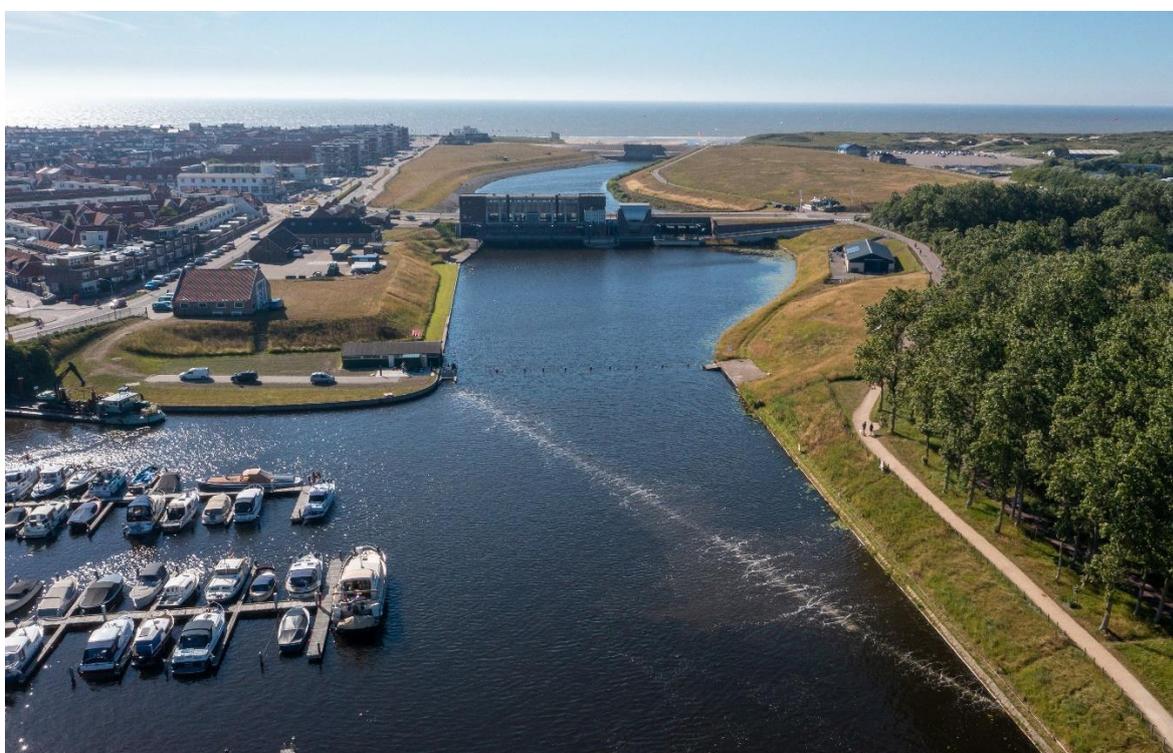


PRESS RELEASE
Katwijk, 4th July 2022

First community-led Bubble Barrier stops plastic pollution from entering the North Sea

What started in 2018 as an initiative of concerned citizens, has now grown into a unique, widely supported mission to tackle plastic pollution in the Katwijk region, The Netherlands. This movement has led to the implementation of an innovative solution against plastic pollution in the municipality of Katwijk: a Bubble Barrier.



The newly installed Bubble Barrier in Katwijk stopping plastic pollution before flowing into the North Sea.

A unique collaboration to fight plastic pollution

Plastic pollution is a growing problem worldwide affecting communities as well as the environment. "During our clean-up activities, we see that plastic pollution flows into the North Sea via the Oude Rijn in Katwijk" says Claar-Els, one of the Coast Busters, a local initiative focused on raising awareness of plastic pollution in Katwijk. "Every year, more than 1 million pieces of plastic end up in the North Sea at Katwijk. That amounts to more than 2 tonnes of plastic which poses a great threat to our ecosystem and our food chain."

To kickstart actions on plastic pollution, the Coast Busters invited councillor Jacco Knappe of the municipality of Katwijk to participate in clean-up activities and see the problem with his own eyes.

“Plastic pollution has no place in a healthy, safe living environment,” emphasises Jacco Knappe who encouraged the local initiative to investigate a long-term solution.

The Coast Busters quickly gained the backing of the whole region to get a long-term solution in place which is being delivered via a partnership with the municipality of Katwijk and the regional waterboard authority Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland.

Support for action has spread to neighbouring municipalities from Holland Rijnland as well as in Teylingen, Wassenaar, Leiderdorp, Woerden, Utrecht and the province of Zuid-Holland. The Coast Busters even got commercial sponsors, on board. “The problem is being tackled locally but has a broader effect: plastic pollution from the entire region upstream will be stopped” says Emile Jaensch, a representative of Holland Rijnland.

“A perfect example that shows that together - government, partners and residents - can make a difference” adds Jacco Knappe.

Implementing a long-term solution with a Bubble Barrier

The first Bubble Barrier within one kilometre from the sea is now fully operational in Katwijk. “We were looking for a long-term solution to stop plastic and found the Bubble Barrier technology an effective way to catch all sizes of plastic particles” says Claar-Els.

In recent years, the Bubble Barrier system has been extensively tested and has been proven to catch plastic particles as small as 1 mm and intercept 86% of floating test material in inland waters.

“The Bubble Barrier positively contributes to clean and healthy water. Thanks to the bubble screen, we ensure that plants and animals are protected from plastic pollution and therefore contribute to increased biodiversity,” says Waldo von Faber of the Rijnland Water Board.

“We are particularly proud to see communities empowered to take action and reaching out to us like the Coast Busters” comments Anne Marieke Eveleens, Co-Founder at The Great Bubble Barrier. “It really shows the power of collaboration to solve plastic pollution.”

How does a Bubble Barrier work?

The Bubble Barrier consists of a bubble curtain, a catchment system, and an air supply. The bubble curtain prevents plastics from floating down the river and into our oceans. The Bubble Barrier is created by pumping air through a perforated tube laying on the bottom of the river. This generates an upward current which directs plastics to the surface. By placing the bubble curtain diagonally across the river, the natural flow of the river will push the plastic waste to the side and into the catchment system. The catchment system is placed at the end of the bubble curtain and stays in place regardless of water level or the wake from passing ships. The Bubble Barrier is deployed along the entire width and depth of the waterway and can work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without interfering with shipping traffic.

Education on Plastic Pollution:

But the local initiative does not stop here. The Coast Busters plan on building an education and monitoring centre to create awareness about the amount of plastic in our waterways, as well as the actions needed to prevent and reduce the problem. The centre will also monitor and analyse the type and amount of plastic collected by the Bubble Barrier. The knowledge from this research will be used to remove even more plastic from the rivers with targeted actions.



Hoogheemraadschap van
Rijnland



Note to editors

You can find videos, photos, animations & illustrations via the link below:

<https://bit.ly/3A7sPDi>

Interviews with the collaborating partners, can be requested via press@thegreatbubblebarrier.com to Veronique Lalain (+31 6 21 60 80 81)

Coast Busters

The Coast Busters Foundation develops and supports initiatives to combat the Plastic Soup. We facilitate projects in which citizens, entrepreneurs and governments can participate and thus contribute to a reduction of the waste problem, in particular (plastic) litter. www.coastbusters.nl

Gemeente Katwijk

Katwijk is a municipality and a town in the western Netherlands, in the province of South Holland. www.katwijk.nl

Hoogheemraadschap van Rijnland

Rijnland works every day on dry feet and clean water. Our main tasks are: ensuring water safety, clean and healthy water, sufficient water and water purification. Everything for a sustainable, water-rich habitat, where we can still live, work and enjoy in the future. www.rijnland.net

Holland Rijnland

The organization Holland Rijnland stimulates and facilitates the cooperation between thirteen municipalities in the region of the same name. The cooperating municipalities are Alphen aan den Rijn, Hillegom, Kaag and Braassem, Katwijk, Leiden, Leiderdorp, Lisse, Nieuwkoop, Noordwijk, Oegstgeest, Teylingen, Voorschoten and Zoeterwoude. www.hollandrijnland.nl

Provincie Zuid Holland

The province of Zuid-Holland is working on issues that are too big for municipalities and too small for the central government. Together with other governments, companies and residents, we work on solutions for social issues. A South Holland that is getting better every day. That is our goal.

www.zuid-holland.nl

The Great Bubble Barrier

The Great Bubble Barrier is award-winning Dutch social enterprise which developed a simple, yet, efficient technology to tackle the issue of plastic pollution closer to the source using bubbles.

www.thegreatbubblebarrier.com